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THE DILEMMA OF RURAL YOUTH.

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WITHIN THE LAST 30 YEARS WE HAVE CHANGED FROM AN AMERICA WHICH WAS TWO-THIRDS RURAL AND ONE-THIRD URBAN TO JUST THE REVERSE. RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE CONSTITUTE A LARGE PORTION OF THIS MIGRATION PATTERN WHICH HAS ADDED TO THE INCREASED CONGESTION OF OUR LARGE METROPOLITAN AREAS. ANOTHER RELATED PROBLEM IS THAT SUDDENLY DURING THE 1960'S WE HAVE AWAKENED TO FIND THAT MAN'S ENVIRONMENT-- THE OUTDOORS, THE WATER, THE AIR, THE BEACHES, THE PARKS--HAS NOT BEEN PRESERVED AS IT SHOULD HAVE. THESE TWO PROBLEMS CALL FOR OUR CONCENTRATED EFFORTS WITH THE SOLUTION POSSIBLY BEING THE REVERSAL OF THIS MASS MIGRATION. IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS REVERSAL, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE GOOD RURAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND THE VARIOUS SERVICES TO THE RURAL YOUNG THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THEIR CITY COUNTERPARTS. THIS SPEECH WAS DELIVERED AT THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE ON RURAL YOUTH, OCTOBER 23-26, 1967, WASHINGTON, D.C., SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, INTERIOR, AND LABOR, OEO, AND THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH OPPORTUNITY. (ES)

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Special Session on Employment of Rural
Youth in Rural and Urban Areas

THE DILEMMA OF RURAL YOUTH

Hon. Morris K. Udall
Member of Congress
Arizona

I am happy to be here with you today to kick-off the workshop in this very important conference. Mrs. Keyserling spoke of a change and what a changing world it is. Old Justice Holmes use to say that the law of life is change. And how true that is.

The problems of Lincoln were not those of Washington; the problems of Teddy Roosevelt were not those of Franklin Roosevelt; even the problems of the late 40's and 50's are not the problems of the 1960's.

And our success as a country has been our ability to adapt to change. This is the real genius of the American people and our Constitution and our institutions--our adaptability to change. I don't think we have ever been tested quite so much in our domestic affairs as we have by the dramatic and remarkable changes that are now upon us. If I were to come back here just a year from today, if we would gather in this room just one year from today, 600,000 young and old Americans, would have left the rural areas and gone to the cities. This is the rate of migration.

A year from today we would have 3 million more Americans than we have today. These are not just statistics. These are people who need hospitals and schools and roads and houses and sewage systems and colleges and all the rest. These are people who will probably want to go to the park or the seashore the same day you want to go and to attend the same college your children want to attend.

The stresses and strains of change are apparent everywhere we look. A year from today a million acres of irreplaceable land--they are not making it any more--will be brought down before the bulldozers for freeways and subdivisions and all the rest. A year from now--10 years from now--we'll face increasingly serious problems and it's conferences such as these and leadership of the kind that you people can give that will enable America to meet the problem of change.

Just since I was a boy--this is an old and trite statistic--but within the last 30 years we've changed from an America which was two-thirds rural and one-third urban to just the reverse. Yet the romance of America that we still think of is in a rural culture, pioneering the West, rugged indi-

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vidualism, the great-strength family farm, the tightly knit rural community where everyone knew everyone. It's been idealized in folk songs and heroes like Jackson and Lincoln and William Jennings Bryan and Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg--this is what we really think of when we think of America. This romantic image that was true when I was a boy and was still true at the end of World War II. It was still the family farm that fed the world and fed this country during that great war, but that day is passing. I was back in the little hometown of mine not too long ago. It had 1,500 people then and it has 1,500 people now; I graduated from high school with a class of 30. When I was back there I inquired how many of my graduating class were still in that community. Would you believe one! The answer was one; the other 29 of us have gone on to other communities and to the cities because this is where the opportunity was. And it use to be that a boy could find a future on his own family farm or in a nearby town or city. If he went on to college, he might come back as a pharmacist, or a lawyer, or a county agent, or a seed dealer, or maybe a farmer himself. But this kind of rural society sadly is disappearing and it has strong and very big and very disturbing implications for us as a society and for the United States as an economy.

Our young people are migrating to the huge city centers, we see many problems arising. This shift that I talked about--from two-thirds rural to two-thirds urban--is really one of the two remarkable things that have happened in this country. While they have many good aspects, they have bad aspects too. Someone was telling me up on the Hill today about the fellow flying an airplane down in Guatemala and shortly after takeoff the pilot came on the intercom and said "there have been some developments in the cockpit I have to tell you about. "There's good news and bad news--I'll give you the bad news first." He said, "the radios are out, we've lost our maps and the navigation equipment is all gone; I haven't the wildest idea where we are or where we are heading, but we're locked on a course heading for a destination God only knows where." He said "now for the good news, we have a 92-mile an hour tailwind." Well, I think of this in connection with the changes that we've seen in our life--we're going somewhere fast, we don't quite know where, but it seems that we do have a tailwind.

The two remarkable changes and I think that you can boil them all down to two really great aspects. One, the fantastic prosperity we've had in this country where we have 40 or 50 percent of the world's production. The goods and services, the good things of life. Where 6 percent of the people of the world have 40 percent of the goods. This has caused us, however, to achieve that standard of living where we've had to jam ourselves into cities. This creates some of the problems that I'm going to talk about. We've had to do this.

It's unfortunate in so many ways, but seemingly the essential of great prosperity is that people have to be concentrated in large cities where the jobs are. I think perhaps this is wrong, I think perhaps it could be changed, but it's a fact and part of this great change we have to talk about.

The second thing is related. We suddenly awoke here in the 1960's to find that man's environment--this great precious outdoors, the fresh air, the water, the quality of life, the beaches, the seashores, the parks--things that make having a good income and a high standard of living worthwhile, are all in real danger. We find a real environmental crisis on our hands, we find that every major river in this country is polluted and the air of most of our major cities is polluted, that our beaches and parks are crowded. The kind of outdoor experience that means so much to most of us is more and more difficult to maintain and, yet, somehow this environmental crisis is caused because we jammed ourselves into cities and because we've used so many of the world's resources to do this. We needed the coal, the water, and the steel and we needed to tear up the land to get these things. They are all related really, these two great aspects that disturb me are related to each other.

And may it not be, and I think perhaps that's the theme of this conference, may it not be that the answer to both of these problems lies in reversing this fantastic migration that we've had from the country, from the rural areas to the cities. We hear so much today about the crisis in our cities, the riots, the sickness, the crime, the ghettos, but this sickness in our city was formed in the country. You can see on the television hurricane Beulah or whatever as it storms down in the Carribean where it doesn't do any damage, but it moves 800 miles or a thousand miles and wrecks vengeance and horrendous damage on a civilized area along our coast. Similarly these problems in the cities were really spawned by this great migration from the country to the city. The migration largely of people who are not equipped to cope with the problems of the city.

And rural youth, the kind of people that are here, the advisors and leaders of rural youth, are faced with the dilemma of having to choose, as I had to choose as a young man, between remaining in areas that offer just a limited opportunity or migrating to where more opportunities are. Because the economy is declining, people are leaving or else migrating to these great urban centers which require job skills and social adjustments that the rural areas have not adequately prepared them for. It's a different life in the cities--a different life. The people aren't always prepared. I read in a book about Jefferson not too long ago and I thought how far we had come when I read a statement that Jefferson made. He said, "the mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government as sores do to the strength of the human body. "When we get piled upon one another in large cities as in Europe, he said, "we shall become as corrupt as they are there." Then he concluded with what I thought was rather a striking and picturesque statement, he said, "no man should live where he can hear his neighbor's dog bark." This was the idea that families should be separated and we should be a nation of rural families. Well, now you can not only hear a man's dog bark, but you can hear his television blare and his wife nag and his toilet flush, I am afraid to say, in too many of our jammed city areas.

As we look at the rural areas of the country today, we find that there are serious manpower problems existing. This is due in large part to inadequate services. In most rural areas, the basic services and amenities of

civilization--housing, health, education, and welfare services--simply must be found in the quantity and kind and quality that we have in the cities. I want to give you a couple of examples. Forty-two percent of farm housing, according to the 1960 census, is substandard. Now in the cities it isn't 42 percent. It's bad enough in the cities; it isn't 42 percent, it's only 14 percent listed as substandard under Census Bureau standards that have been developed. The average years of schooling completed by rural adults, 25 years or older, the average schooling is 8.8 years in rural areas. 8.8 contrasting with 11.1 years among urban adults--an average of about 2 1/2 years more schooling for the youth in the cities.

I should have mentioned welfare too as an area of basic service, a basic aspect of life, because this is a rather crucial point. Twenty-one States do not even participate in the aid-to-dependent children program. Many of these are in the south, but there is Federal money available that goes to the other States that is not even used in 21 of our States and most of those are largely rural States. I read an article in the Sunday New York Times just a few weeks ago which took a typical family. The author spent considerable time with them in Boston and traced their history. They had come from Mississippi, a sharecropper family; this Negro father no longer had opportunities there, he had no job, but they moved to Boston. He was illiterate, had a job or two, but couldn't hold them and went on to other work and now he had to leave the home so his wife could draw aid-to-dependent children. They have been there 10 or 12 years and some of the younger members of the family had participated in the riots in Boston. It was a sociologist's attempt to find why and how this had come about. But even the welfare services are inadequate in so many rural areas. This is a key factor. If you can't get a job in rural Arizona, and there are no welfare payments; and you still can't get a job in Los Angeles because you are illiterate and untrained, the welfare payments there for your wife and children may be $150 a month. In Los Angeles, one of the ghettos or one of the slum areas may look pretty good, and this is a part of the problem that I think has received relatively little attention. We just had a continuing flood of out-migration, in short, from the rural areas to cities. As you know, the number of Representatives from each State are adjusted every 10 years. One Congressman told me on speaking of his State, that his State had gone from 7 or 8 just a few years ago down to 4. He said, "the greatest export from my State is our young people." I think this is ture of many States and many areas to account for these 600,000 individuals who leave the farms and go into the big cities this year and next year and the year after that unless we do something about it. Another factor contributing to this, of course, are the low wages and poor working conditions, particularly among farm workers.

Let me give you a couple of statistics here: of the 35 million people in poverty, according to present standards, that are used in OEO, 17 million are rural people. The third that's rural accounts for a half of the people who are in poverty. Forty-two percent of farm workers are

covered by hospital insurance, that's 42 percent as compared with 76 percent that have some kind of hospital insurance in other occupations. Farm workers are the only group that are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act. There are bills pending now in the Congress to bring farm workers under the NLRA to give them the protection of the National Labor Relations Act. What a strange thing it is that the people who needed help all these years, the people lowest on the totem pole, who have needed the protection and assistance of our great Labor Department and the NLRA and the NLRA and the facilities it has offered were left out. The rural people the farm workers, by and large were not covered. It was just a year ago that finally some effort was made successfully in the Congress to bring farm workers under minimum wage, but with a great deal of limitations. I know this is a sensitive subject with many farmers and farming is a big industry in my area. It's a very serious matter and arguments can be made that minimum wage and NLRB and union organization, etc., simply aren't applicable to farm work. This would be a subject all its own. I don't want to take your time to attempt to argue it one way or the other, but I think this should be surveyed, should be studied. We should seek to determine whether rural poverty, whether the migration from the rural areas to the cities is in part caused by the fact that we have higher standards for the treatment of working people in city occupations and in city areas then we have had on the farm.

I heard a pretty good argument made not too long ago by a businessman who was engaged in farming who said that he felt farmers would be better off if they had unions of farm workers. He said "I'd like to pay more. A head of lettuce costs 15 or 20 cents, perhaps." He said, "I'd be glad to pay and I think most people would be glad to pay another penny--this is about all it would take to double the prices that are paid to the people who work on the lettuce farm." But he said, "if I could deal with an honest democratic union that could provide me the farm labor I need and if I could increase my prices just enough to cover the additional payments, I would be better off, I think the workers would be better off and I think the country would be better off."

These are some of the problems that we have in this whole area of farm labor and I think we've got to take a look; we can't just bury our heads in the sand and assume that the way we've always done things is the way we should continue to do them. I think we ought to take a hard look at all aspects of rural life and see what's wrong and what's right.

Another problem in rural areas, of course, is the fact that available workers have limited and largely obsolete skills. There's a great necessity, if we're going to reverse this migration, to give people in rural areas vocational and technical training and jet-age skills and space-age skills so that we could have some incentive to get defense installations and government installations and private industry locating more and more in rural areas instead of continuing this flood to the cities. You know we find that even in farming itself this great wave of change that we've seen in this generation means that the fellow who simply is equipped with a strong back and a willing mind can no longer make a go in most aspects of farming.

Hon. Morris K. Udall

Farming's now become a technological business. You need to know machinery, fertilizers, and a lot of other things that you didn't have to know when I was working on a farm 30 years ago. Farming is now a big business. It requires a lot of the same skills that we need in other forms of business.

In the rural areas we have limited job opportunities as I have said because there hasn't been the same kind of economic growth in our rural communities. Industries simply aren't willing to locate there. I suspect that the total output of goods and services of the little community that I grew up in has maybe grown 10 percent since I left there 25 years ago, while the National economy has grown 3 or 4 hundred percent. Industries simply haven't been willing to move there; the growth and prosperity of the cities and the rest of the country have passed by the rural areas.

Let me talk some more and briefly about the extent of poverty among minority group members because this is where the poverty is concentrated as everyone knows. Twenty-seven percent of Negroes live in rural areas despite the emphasis I have given today on the Negro problem in the ghettos and in the cities. We still have nearly 27 percent of all Negro families living in rural areas. The poverty gap has actually widened in rural areas between Negroes and whites in the last 20 years. Instead of closing that gap, the gap has actually widened. There has been some improvement for both, but the white citizens have improved so much faster that the gap is actually bigger now than it was then. The median family income for rural Negroes in 14 southern States last year was less than $1,500. This was the median. In my own part of the country 20 percent of the Spanish-surnamed people live in rural areas of the Southwest and over one-third of the Spanish-surnamed families live below the poverty level.

A lot of these facts are due to the seasonality of work, particularly in agriculture and our failure to provide the tools to coordinate farm work and non-farm work. Certainly, we will always have seasonal work in farming areas, but there is a lot that can be done to coordinate the seasonal worker and to find out the things that he could be doing in the off season.

Rural areas, in short, I think have been and are being depleted of the most productive workers and those that are migrating are compounding every year the social and economic problems of the cities. We see the strange thing of each end of it getting worse. The rural areas falling further and further behind, losing their best people and those people being jammed into cities and the conditions of the cities getting worse. It would be different if the change was improving one or the other, but the fact is that it is harmful to both. I am sorry to say that the Congress has not done enough to meet the urban challenge, challenges of poverty, challenges of the sickness of our cities and all the ills of urban life. But whatever we have done, we've short-changed the rural areas. Most of our programs have not set out to adequately stress and help the rural poverty. The programs have been directed at the cities and I think in putting together the poverty programs and the job opportunity programs this imbalance ought to be corrected because, as I've said, there's a direct relationship between the sickness of

our cities and the decline of the rural areas.

I would say to you that making rural areas more and more economically viable is essential to the well-being of our country. Not just the rural part of it, but the city part as well. We ought to start by improving what we might call the infrastructure of the rural areas, the basic roads and schools and health facilities and all the rest that I have discussed. I think we've got to find ways to encourage industry to develop in rural areas and ways to supplement the seasonal industries so that you will have a work force that can work part of the year in seasonal agricultural industries and the other part of the year in other types.

Secretary Freeman recently stated that there is new hope in towns and small cities where industrial jobs can be provided without the high cost and the congestion of the cities. I think he very rightly called for a change in the direction of locating new industries. I think this is a place that we have some real hope. At one time there was good reason, good economic reason, why all the steel really had to be manufactured in Pittsburgh, nearly all of it. This was the only way with our transportation and communications of that day where we could bring the ore and the coke and the coal and the trained manpower all together and it was dictated by the cost of transportation, the development of the art of steel making in those days. Somehow we concentrated all the automobile making in Detroit, we concentrated other industries in other areas. Some of our great cities have been stormed because of this, but I see a new pattern developing, hopeful new patterns. We can communicate now so much better, we can travel so much more quickly and inexpensively. We found new resources of iron and ore besides the Masabi Range, new fuels besides coal and new and diverse ways of providing basic buidling materials and all the rest.

So I think that we no longer have to be bound necessarily by this strange and disturbing factor that I have pointed out in the beginning, that to have this great prosperity somehow it has seemed that we had to jam ourselves into the cities. I think we can lick this. I think we can improve upon it. I think it's no longer an essential or inevitable development. I think that youth must be trained and educated so that they will get and keep and have the skills that they need for these kind of rural jobs I am talking about. And I think we need counseling and help and assistance right now before it's too late. The kind of young people who tend to migrate out of rural areas do so because there are no opportunities. We must have stepped up assistance, full range of employment service, counseling and training and placement and all the rest.

Well, I rambled a bit, but I hope that I have been able to strike some kind of a note that will introduce this important discussion today because this is important. The rural economy in this country and the rural people in this country are important and if we can find some of the answers I have suggested, we can help the rural areas and help the cities as well. I commend all of you who are participating and attending this conference that history may well note, if we succeed in meeting the challenging problems of this generation as we have others, that maybe a turning point, a little bit

of a turning point, was reached in this conference. I not only want to congratulate you, but the government officials and the agencies and departments, who made it possible. I want to thank you for letting me be a small part of it this afternoon.